



Fire Prevention Bureau

Newington Volunteer Fire Department

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According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there are more home structure fires in the cooler months than any other time of year. As pine needles begin to drop on living room carpets, NFPA is offering suggestions for safe storage and removal of holiday decorations.

"It's not uncommon to see residents keeping lights and Christmas trees up past December," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of communications for NFPA. "The reality is, continued use of seasonal lighting and dried-out Christmas trees can pose significant fire hazards in and outside the home."

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they have a higher chance of being deadly. NFPA recommends getting rid of the tree when it's dry. Dried trees should not be kept in the home, garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program.

In 2005-2009, holiday lights and other decorative lighting were involved in an annual average of 150 home fires, 8 civilian deaths, 14 related injuries, and \$8.5 million in direct property damage. To reduce the risk of holiday light fires and keep equipment in good condition for next year, the Newington Volunteer Fire Department recommends the following tips:

- To unplug electric decorations, use the gripping area provided on the plugs. Never pull the cord to unplug a device from electrical outlets. Doing so can harm the cord's wire and insulation and even lead to an electrical shock or fire.
- As you're putting away electrical light strings, take time to inspect each for damage.
- Throw out light sets if they have loose connections, broken sockets or cracked or bare wires.
- Do not place a damaged set of lights back into the storage box for next year's use.
- Wrap each set of lights and put them in individual plastic bags, or wrap the lights around a piece of cardboard.
- Store electrical decorations in a dry place where they cannot be damaged by water or dampness. Also, keep them away from children and pets.

Please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at the telephone number or e-mail address above with any questions.

Captain Cory LaChance
Fire Prevention Bureau
Newington Volunteer Fire Department

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